

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE POOR

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This study is concerned with patterns of the social relationships of the poor in the context of the theory of social exclusion. It examines the intensity and the nature of the relationships of the poor with relatives, friends and neighbours. With regard to the latter, we distinguish work activity performed in the framework of social relationships from leisure activity. The source of data used is the 1999/2000 Living Conditions and Time Budget Survey of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office. Thus, we present a new approach to the study of personal relationship networks, as we make deductions regarding relationships based on the amount of time spent together.

The questions of the study are derived from the theory of social exclusion and from the results of earlier Hungarian research concerning the sociography and relationship networks of the poor. These questions are the following. Are the social relationships of the poor truly more confined than those of the non-poor? Do relationships with neighbours truly dominate over others? Does work performed together or for each other truly play a greater role in these relationships than leisure activity does? And finally: do the poor feel more lonely and isolated than the non-poor members of society?

KEYWORDS: Social exclusion; Personal relationship networks; Use of time.

In sociological literature, especially that concerned with poverty, the concept of social exclusion appears with increasing frequency. The study of social exclusion is based on French research traditions. The keystone of these is an image of society as a cultural and political community, a series of ties, rights and obligations rooted in a moral canon. Social exclusion is the process by which a person is excluded from the moral canon that is the foundation of the organisation of society (*Room; 1997*).

The third poverty research program of the European Union (European Community Programme, Poverty 3) recommended that poverty should be interpreted by researchers in four dimensions: 1. in relation to the system of democratic and legal institutions that ensure the integration of citizens; 2. in the context of labour market situation, which provides economic integration; 3. with respect to the welfare system, which assures social integration, and finally 4. with respect to familial and communal institutions that govern relationships between individuals.

In this approach, the pattern of the social relationships of individuals is one of the dimensions of social exclusion, which may be interpreted on three levels: those of 1. family

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relationships, 2. social relationships, and, 3. participation in social organisations. Issues examined in the context of family relationships include whether the respondents live alone or in a family, whether they raise their children alone, whether they have contacts with their family members, siblings or parents living outside their household and how frequently and on what occasions they meet. With regard to social relationships, questions concern relationships with neighbours, friends, acquaintances and colleagues. These areas also allow us to make deductions about the social relationships of respondents from the extensiveness, intensity and nature of the network of relationships. As regards participation in social organisations we can focus on membership in civil organisations, political activity, participation in religious meetings, and any other social relationships that facilitate the integration of the individual into the society (*Non-monetary ...*; 1995).

Our study analyses the patterns of the social relationships in the context of the first two levels. Within these, we examine relationships with family and relatives, friends, and neighbours. Theories concerning social exclusion also deal with the possible causes of exclusion. These include prejudices, ethnicity and deviance. Researchers also point out the lack of financial resources, i.e. poverty, as one of these possible causes (*Non-monetary ...*, 1995).

This study attempts to provide empirical evidence, based on this idea, for the assumption that the social relationships of the poor differ in both their intensity and their nature from those characteristics of the non-poor society. Basically, causal connections between individual phenomena are frequently questionable. When examining a network of personal relationships, especially in the case of relationships within a family or with relatives, it is hard to identify poverty and the characteristics of the network of relationships as cause or as effect. Is it poverty that leads to the weakening of family and relations ties or in the sphere of close family relationships possibly conduces to divorce, or is it the dissolution of family ties that results in a 'recession' in the possession of material goods? Does poverty weaken contact with relatives living outside the immediate family, or does it lead to poverty if relatives 'let go' of a family in need of support. Such dilemmas conduct the researcher of poverty issues to yet one more problem. Namely: how to differentiate the phenomenon of poverty and the phenomenon of social exclusion. In this respect, there is a wide spectrum of possible approaches. One extreme is represented by approaches that define poverty as having a low income and social exclusion as a multidimensional phenomenon extending to several areas of material and non-material existence. The other extreme is the assumption that these two concepts are identical. According to the social exclusion theory that the present study is based on, poverty means the lack of financial resources and low-level material consumption, while social exclusion is defined as exclusion from those goods that represent the integration of individuals into society.

QUESTIONS OF THE STUDY

According to the theory of social exclusion, poverty may be one of the causes of the narrowing of the network of personal relationships. However, this assumption needs to be justified, for often its direct opposite is found in sociographical literature, which reveals an abundance of relationships among the poor. This abundance mostly arises from need. That is to say, poor people often need material help, or assistance in the form of work, to substitute for the utilisation of services. This presupposes a more extensive construction

of relationships, based on tighter bonds. Of course it must also be noted that such sociographical research was generally focused on the study of closed communities, which may influence survey results significantly and which seriously limits generalisation.

The results from Hungarian network research in this field are also controversial. Studies focused on friendly relationships indicate expressly that the friendly relationship networks of the elder generations, of people with a lower education and of those living in villages are narrower than those of other social groups (*Utasi; 1990, Albert-Dávid; 1998*). Yet a research conducted in the late eighties has revealed that relationships with neighbours are most intensive in the very groups mentioned previously (*Angelusz-Tardos; 1988*). Searching for reasons, researchers conclude that these groups frequently find themselves in situations where they need to borrow money, food or assistance in work, and neighbours can play an effective role in fulfilling such needs. As regards relationships with relatives, research findings assert that in the groups mentioned previously, relationships with relatives are more dominant than in other social groups (*Angelusz-Tardos; 1988*).

Yet all this is not sufficient to conclude that the personal relationship network of the poor is patterned similarly to the previous groups, for the poor include in proportions higher than the national average – apart from the groups listed – divorcees, people raising children alone and widows or widowers. Within these groups, in certain cases, e.g. with regard to relationships with relatives, we can expect findings quite contrary to the previous.

The first part of the study categorises relationships according to the mutual relationship of the parties, and examines the characteristics of the personal relationship networks of the poor.

Social relationships may be grouped not only by the relationship of the parties, but also by the function of the relationship. We can distinguish relationships fulfilling emotional and instrumental functions. Emotional relationships are primarily meant to satisfy such needs of individuals as the need for company to counter solitude, for resolving events that pose a problem or conflict to the individual, and for sharing experiences. On the other hand, satisfaction of instrumental functions may manifest in the form of acquiring material goods, of borrowing and of assistance in the form of work. Naturally, these functions may be present simultaneously in a single human relationship. Given that the poor need support more frequently because of their financial indigence, it can be assumed that their relationships are dominated by those fulfilling instrumental functions. That is to say, the poor give or receive material support or assistance in work more than the non-poor. The second part of our study undertakes to explore this issue.

The characteristics of the network of personal relationships can also be examined in its subjective aspect, rather than only in the objective one: how respondents experience the development of their human relationships, how isolated they feel, and how they perceive the medium that presents them potential opportunities for forming relationships. The last part of our paper presents the patterns of key points in the subjective experience of the network of personal relationships in the poor and non-poor strata.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE APPROACH TO THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

To explore the characteristics of social relationships for our study, we basically processed data regarding the use of time by individuals. This was intended to obtain a picture

of the so-called micro-networks, i.e. the network of personal relationships of the respondents. This approach is fundamentally different from the methods applied in Hungarian network research.

The 'three friends' method concentrates on the composition of relationships and the study of heterogeneity (*Utasi*; 1900). The other, the Fischer method allows for a more complex analysis, as it can measure, apart from the former, extensiveness, i.e. the size of the network of relationships, and the density, i.e. whether various members of the network are also interconnected.

The Living Conditions and Time Budget Survey contains three kinds of information with regard to the network of social relationships. On the one hand, it reveals the role of social relationships in the daily time use of individuals, i.e. the amount of time the respondents spend in these relationships. On the other hand, it also shows the proportion of relationships with relatives, friends and neighbours within this. And third, it helps to point out the shared activities that respondents perform in company.

However, an analysis of these factors does not cover the entirety of the network of personal relationships, for relationships become manifest not only in time spent together, but also for example in financial support, issues of which cannot be revealed merely on the basis of time management. Another limiting factor of sorts is that the amount of time spent together is not necessarily equivalent to the intensity or the potential scope of a relationship. That is to say, individuals might have valuable relationships that play a very important role for them even though they cannot devote much time to these relationships. It is also feasible for a relationship to be based on the satisfaction of a certain function that, though it requires little time, is in itself very important. And there are also relationships with a high potential scope, i.e. ones that are not intensive on time use, yet can be mobilised in need. Despite all these limits, the use of time may be regarded as an area of individual resource management within which the amount of time that individuals devote to social relationships does have significance.

THE CONCEPT OF POVERTY

There is no universal and generally accepted definition of poverty. Researchers use this concept on the basis of quite different approaches. On our part, we do not presume to resolve the debate over definition and measurement techniques that has been going on for over a century, since the beginning of the empirical study of poverty. Any definition of poverty and delineation of the poor can only take place as a series of arbitrary decisions by researchers. Poverty is a relative concept and has different meanings not only in different societies, but also in various social groups. Even the people involved would draw various boundaries between poor and non-poor. Can such boundaries be drawn at all? To what extent do the zones delineated by such boundaries express different situations in life? And perhaps no-one doubts that there are significant differences within the group of the poor as well. The increasingly current use of approaches of 'absolute poverty' does not abate all these difficulties. In the words of *O. Lewis*, 'We all know poverty when we see it, but few know what it is exactly.' (*Lewis*; 1969) However, because of all these dilemmas we present a brief explanation of the concept of poverty used in this study.

This is an objective, relative and multidimensional concept of poverty that covers the material aspects of the conditions of living. We have considered four dimensions of material living conditions: 1. income, 2. the value of the home, 3. the amount of durable consumer goods in the home, and 4. any movable or immovable property of great value. We would have preferred to formulate the concept of poverty used taking into consideration a wider spectrum of consumption, but unfortunately the data survey did not allow this.

1. *Income.* In our data survey, income status was asked with regard to the preceding month and to the total income of the family. The offered answers consisted of income category, therefore we first had to assign a specific income value to the families. This value was the mean value of the income category. In consideration of the principle of the economies of scale of the family, we then calculated income per consumption unit rather than per capita from the family income, using an elasticity coefficient of 0.73. Based on these income figures, we classified families to five groups of equal size.

2. *Value of home.* Our data survey contained no information concerning the value of the home, therefore we used a regression estimate to count this. The basis of the estimate was the value given by respondents in the survey 'Residence conditions, 1999', projected to one square metre. The procedure of estimation involved creating a model from the data of the 'Residence conditions, 1999' survey, where the dependent variable was the value of the home projected to one square metre. Independent variables were factors of crucial influence to value: the location of the home by region and type of settlement; the type of the building; variables concerning comfort level; and data about the quality of the home. Applying the coefficients of the regression equation to our data survey, we produced the home value variable, which we used to produce quintiles. The lowest quintile comprised people who did not own a home or whose home had very little value.

3. *Durable consumer goods.* To produce this contracted variable, we used the possession of washing machines, refrigerators, televisions, computers, microwave ovens and VCRs. We made a distinction between traditional and automatic washing machines, as well as between black-and-white and colour televisions. In the cases of washing machines, refrigerators and TV sets, we also noted the age of these appliances. The elemental variables were transformed into standardised Z-scores, so that commonly possessed items had a lower weight and rare goods a higher weight in the contracted index. This index was then also used to produce quintiles.

4. *Movable and immovable property of great value.* Components included possession of holiday homes, motor vehicles, garage stalls and land plots. In the case of motor vehicles we noted the brand and age of the vehicle, and we took into account the size of land plots. These variables were contracted by a procedure similar to that used with durable consumer goods.

We used cluster analysis to join the individual dimensions. People who appeared in the worst situation with regard to all the studied dimensions jointly were regarded as poor. We used this method with the intention to ensure that the group of the poor include not only those who are in the worst situation in all the dimensions, but also people who might live in better circumstances with respect to one or another dimension, yet are altogether closer to the families who had drifted to the lowest quintile in all dimensions than they are to any other cluster.

Thereby, 17.1 percent of families, 15.7 percent of all population over 15 years of age were categorised as poor by our working definition. Among the poor, the average income per consumption unit of families does not reach 23 thousand HUF. Nearly one third of them lack a bathroom and almost half have no toilets within their homes. One family in ten does not own a refrigerator or a washing machine. A proportion of 70 percent owns only an old-fashioned washing machine. Modernisation goods such as microwave ovens and personal computers are almost completely absent. Even with widespread articles such as televisions, there are significant shortfalls. Nearly a quarter have only a black-and-white television. 95 percent of poor families do not own a car.

The figure in the following presents those demographic and sociological characteristics that indicated a risk of poverty below average or above average, i.e. the probability of groups with these characteristics being in the group of the poor.² The figure allows for a scrutiny of the structural differences between the poor and the non-poor.³

The type of settlement plays an important role with regard to the appearance of poverty. Progression downward along the hierarchy of settlements shows an increase in the risk of poverty. While the residents of Budapest comprise almost 20 percent of the entire population over 15 years, less than one tenth of the poor live in the capital, 36 percent of the total population, but 42 percent of the poor live in villages.

With respect to age groups, the most outstanding difference is in the elderly generation. Even those over 60 are over-represented among the poor, but the greatest structural difference appears in those over 70. While they represent less than 10 percent of the total population over 15 years, this group still comprises 17 percent of the poor.

With regard to family status, divorce and widowhood are most prone to increase the risk of poverty. The proportion of the divorced is 8 percent to the entire population, while it is 14 percent among the poor. The same indices for widows are 11 percent and 16 percent, respectively.

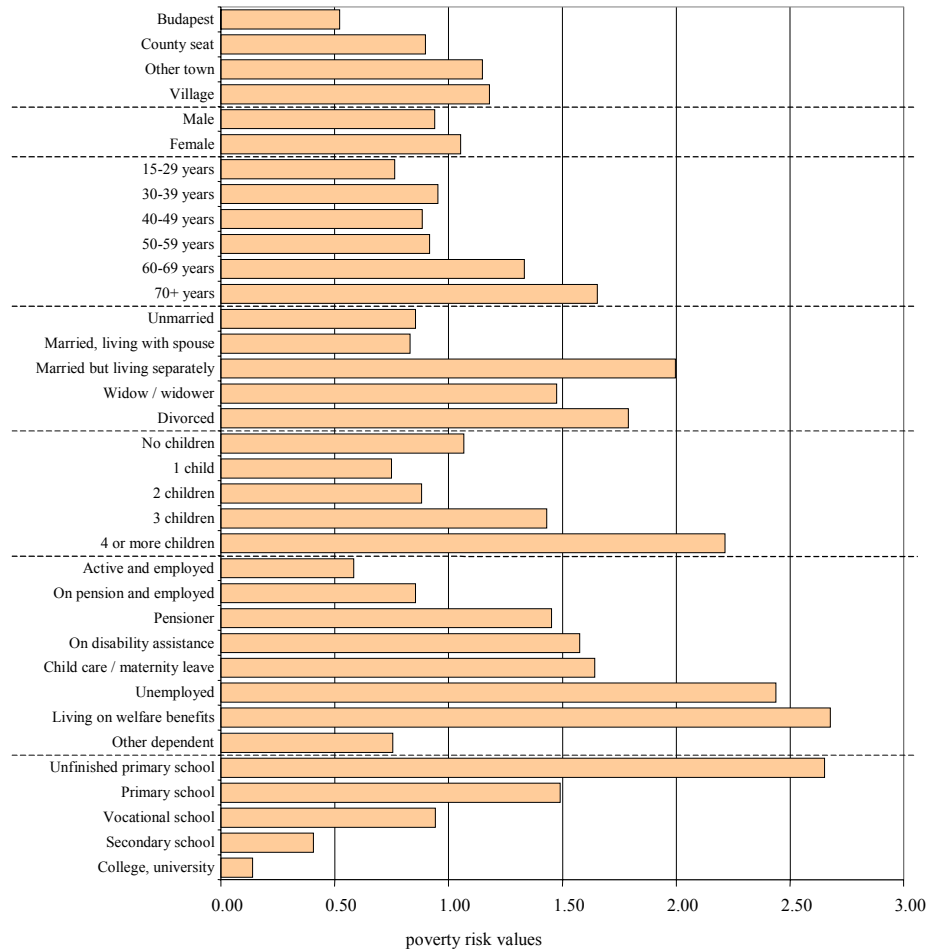
As regards the number of children, the extremes are most endangered. There is a higher risk of poverty in families where there are no dependent children – though probably effects of age are behind this – and in those where there are 3 or more children. The proportion of the latter group among those over 15 is nearly 5 percent, while it exceeds 7 percent among the poor.

With respect to the labour market dimension, it can be stated that inactivity definitely increases the risk of poverty. While 53 percent of the population over 15 are inactive, this index is 73 percent among the poor. However, there are significant differences within the inactive subset. Within the group of pensioners, those on disability assistance are most endangered, but those living on welfare benefits and the unemployed also have a high poverty risk.

With regard to educational level, it can be stated that higher education levels entail increasingly lower risks of poverty.

² Risks of poverty were computed as follows. First, we examined the proportion of those belonging to the demographic or sociological group concerned, to the entire population. The same proportion was calculated within the group of those living below various poverty thresholds. The risk value was 1 if a certain group was represented in the same proportion within the entire population as within the group of the poor. If their proportion was higher among the poor, the risk index had a value over 1, and correspondingly, it had a value below 1 if the proportion was higher in the entire population. The value of the index was $Q=q_p/q$, where Q is the risk of poverty, q_p is the proportion of the group within the poor, and q is the proportion of the group within the entire population.

³ Data appearing in the table represent the population between ages 15 and 84, i.e. those who had been interviewed with regard to the use of time use in the survey.

Risk of poverty in demographic and sociological groups

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USE OF TIME AMONG THE POOR AND THE NON-POOR

The time the poor allot to social relationships is influenced by the structure of their entire time management, since time is a finite resource of which we can spend more on one activity only if we take it from another one.

The first major structural element of time management is *time used to satisfy physiological needs*. Within this, the largest share is taken by sleep, amounting to nearly one third of each day. Time spent on body care and hygiene takes about 1 of the 24 hours of a day. The third component of physiological needs is eating, to which respondents allot somewhat less than one and a half hours per day. However, meals are also one of the manifestations of family socialisation, of friends and colleagues being together, therefore

this activity will be the first one that we will subsequently examine with regard to time spent on social relationships. All modes of passive rest that serve physical regeneration were also included among physiological activities. The poor spend 45 minutes with passive rest on an average day, while the amount of time thus spent is under half an hour among the non-poor. The following table shows these data broken down along the dimension of activity against inactivity (see Table 1).

Table 1

Time allotted to physiological needs on an average day
(minutes)

The person	Sleep		Body hygiene		Eating, drinking		Passive rest	
	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor
Active age, working	494	488	57	59	86	87	18	14
Active age, not working	545	526	49	59	90	91	40	33
Inactive age, working	525	497	50	59	82	88	61	27
Inactive age, not working	570	557	51	54	88	90	79	60
Active age, studying	563	543	54	58	77	81	11	12
<i>Total</i>	<i>539</i>	<i>514</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>57</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>26</i>

Source: The source of all data is the Living Conditions and Time Budget Survey of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office.

The second major group of activities is comprised of so-called *socially bound activities*. This includes all welfare-producing activities, i.e. all work, regardless of whether it is done for money, on the principle of reciprocity or on a voluntary basis. It also includes household chores, which we regard as work done for one's own household. We have also included studying and all forms of self-education in the sphere of socially bound activities.

One major component of work was time spent on working in one's principal occupation. On an average day, the poor spent one and a half hours and the non-poor over two and a half hours working in their principal occupations. However, this difference is a result of structural differences, as the proportion of the inactives is higher among the poor. Time spent on subsidiary work for money is higher among the poor, although relative to principal occupations, the time spent on such work is very little. On an average day, the poor spend 7 minutes and the non-poor 3 minutes on such activity. The proportion of voluntary work is low; it does not amount to a notable part of the daily time use of either the poor or the non-poor. In the exploration of social time use, we have also attempted to delineate activities within the sphere of work but related to the construction and maintenance of the network of personal relationships. Activities thus classed included those that a person living in a household performs for that household in the company of relatives, friends or neighbours; as well as those performed for other private households without taking payment. Time spent on such activities was 19 minutes in the case of the poor and 13 minutes among the non-poor. Within both groups, people of active age but not working registered the highest values here. As a last type of work activities, we examined home chores and all activities related to the maintenance of the household. The non-poor

spend somewhat less than 4 hours on these, while the poor spend over 4 hours. The difference between the average values for the two groups is nearly 45 minutes. This is probably related to the fact that the non-poor are able to redeem more housework by the use of services than the non-poor.

The second great group of socially bound activities is studying. In total, the poor spend significantly less time on this than the non-poor. However, this is fundamentally due to the fact that the younger generations are under-represented in the poor group. Table 2 presents the differences arising from activity and inactivity.

Table 2

Time allotted to welfare producing activities, studying and household maintenance on an average day (minutes)

The person	Principal occupation		Other work for money		Voluntary work		Work for own household with others, or for other households		Housework for own household		Studying	
	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor	poor	non-poor
Active age, working	287	301	10	4	-	1	18	12	193	169	-	3
Active age, not working	-	-	10	4	1	1	28	22	329	358	2	2
Inactive age, working	210	207	14	6	4	1	5	7	218	186	-	-
Inactive age, not working	-	-	2	1	-	1	13	12	272	280	-	-
Active age, studying	10	12	5	2	-	1	10	9	81	76	154	148
<i>Total</i>	<i>90</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>258</i>	<i>215</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>20</i>

Finally, we examined *free time* as the third major area of time use, which is also the main scene where social relationships become manifest. The extent of leisure activities is somewhat less among the non-poor, and amounts to exactly 5 hours among the poor. All activities that individuals carry on with their relatives, friends and neighbours were included in this sphere and registered as social activities.

Most free time is available to students and those of inactive age and not working; they are followed by those of active age but not working (see Table 3).

Table 3

Time allotted to leisure activities on an average day (minutes)

The person	Free time	
	poor	non-poor
Active age, working	234	238
Active age, not working	317	308
Inactive age, working	217	294
Inactive age, not working	343	353
Active age, studying	323	342
<i>Total</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>282</i>

SOCIAL CONNECTIONS OF THE POOR

The social relationships of the poor will be examined in three aspects: those of relationships with relatives, relationships with friends, and relationships with neighbours.⁴ We intend to examine whether the social relationships of the poor are more intensive than those of the non-poor.

The data of time spent in the company of relatives, friends and neighbours were regarded as primary indicators of intensity. Time allotted to social relationships was computed from the figures of work done without taking payment, of free time spent together, and of shared meals or drinks.⁵

Relationships with relatives

Our results indicate no difference between the poor and the non-poor with regard to the amount of time spent in the company of relatives. The time spent with relatives on an average day was somewhat over two hours in both groups. The poor have spent 129 and the non-poor 130 minutes, while the entire population 129 minutes in the company of relatives.

However, the structure of the poor with respect to demographic and sociological properties does differ from that of the non-poor (see the Figure), which may have two consequences with regard to the causes of this phenomenon. One is that the mechanisms bearing on this phenomenon among the poor are different from those that prevail among the non-poor. The other is that the factors working among the poor are the same, but due to the structural differences the opposing effects counterbalance each other.

We first tested the former assumption. Analysing groups created by types of settlement, our data confirm the results of earlier research according to which time spent with relatives increases with a downward progression along the hierarchy of settlements. This mechanism manifests itself in a different manner among the poor, for on the one hand the differences are not so great, and on the other, no correlation is found with the type of settlement. Poor people living in villages do not spend more time with their relatives than those living in cities.

In the groups broken down by age, the dependent variable exhibits an inverted U-shaped curve. Values are lowest in the youngest and oldest groups, while the highest values appear in the age group of 30 to 39 years. Among the poor, the differences between age groups are smaller. Furthermore, the time spent with relatives by the youngest age group is not one of the lowest values as compared to other age groups.

With regard to the differences by sex and by family status, the poor exhibited the same pattern as the entire population. Time spent in the company of relatives is higher for women and the married, and lower in other groups.

⁴ In the Living Conditions and Time Budget Survey it was left to respondents to classify each of their relationships as one with a relative, with a friend or with a neighbour.

⁵ Only those activities were considered that refer to shared activity. For example we did not consider time spent watching TV if no activity was performed together while watching, even though several people might have been present. This approach helps dampen the distortion arising from the fact that a substantial part of the time spent with relatives consists of activities resulting from living together. This is an important point, as we had no possibility to break down relatives according to whether they live in the same family or not.

Table 4

Time spent with relatives on an average day
(minutes)

Characteristics	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Type of settlement			
Budapest	126	118	118
County seat	130	123	124
Town	131	132	131
Village	127	138	136
Sex			
Male	121	122	121
Female	135	137	137
Age group			
15-29 years	137	112	115
30-39 years	172	167	167
40-49 years	128	133	132
50-59 years	118	134	131
60-69 years	116	134	130
70 + years	100	104	102
Family status			
Unmarried	106	92	94
Married	172	165	165
Married but living separately from spouse	128	104	113
Widow/widower	75	79	77
Divorced	98	100	100
Number of children in the family			
No children in the family	106	112	110
1 child	143	144	143
2 children	182	163	165
3 children	195	201	199
4 or more children	219	201	207
Economic activity			
Active and employed	115	122	121
On pension and employed	128	134	132
Pensioner	108	126	121
On disability assistance	140	153	152
On child care or maternity leave	295	342	330
Unemployed	149	169	159
Living on welfare benefits	153	172	165
Other dependent	121	107	109
Level of education			
Unfinished primary school	112	112	112
Primary school	132	127	128
Vocational school	134	134	134
Secondary school	139	129	129
College, university	122	140	138

If a family has dependent children, then the time spent with relatives is significantly higher than if there are no children in the family. A higher number of children entails an increased amount of time spent with relatives. These statements are equally valid for the poor and the non-poor group.

Neither do differing mechanisms appear among the poor and non-poor with respect to activity in the labour market; the differences between individual subgroups are similar in the two samples. The inactives typically spend more time with their relatives, the only exception being pensioners. However, this is probably also due to effects of age and family status (see Table 4).

To return to our original question, whether it is possible to find any mechanisms that operate only among the poor, bivariate analyses allow us to answer that apart from a few exceptions, generally the same criteria determine the extent of time spent with relatives among the poor as in the group of the non-poor.

However, the structure of the poor by the examined criteria does differ from that of the non-poor, while the values of the dependent variable are not different for the two groups (129 and 130 minutes). The explanation of this phenomenon is that some of the groups over-represented among the poor entail a higher value of the dependent variable, while other, similarly over-represented groups are characterised by lower time-use figures. These effects counterbalance one another. The categories over-represented among the poor include single people, the elderly, divorcees and widows. The over-representation of these groups would result in the poor spending less time in the company of relatives than the non-poor. However, the high proportion of people with large families, and especially of inactive people, has an effect contrary to the former. Thus, ultimately no significant differences are apparent between the poor and the non-poor in this respect.

In the next stage of our analysis, we applied a multivariate statistical model (linear regression) to examine whether poverty has an effect of its own on time spent with relatives, after eliminating the effects of demographic and social characteristics. This is essentially a measurement of whether it would be possible to register a significant difference in the values of the dependent variable in the poor and the non-poor groups, if the distribution of these two groups was identical with regard to the demographic and sociological criteria studied. Our results confirm the supposition stated after the bivariate analyses, i.e. that poverty has no effect of its own on the amount of time spent with relatives, once the effects of specific demographic and sociological criteria have been removed out (see Table 5).

We also wanted to find out how poverty modifies the effect of individual criteria. In the bivariate analyses we had found that certain categories of some variables had different effects on the dependent variable in the poor and the non-poor samples. To measure this, we incorporated interaction effects into our regression model. These independent variables indicate whether the effects of a given feature are significantly modified by the state of poverty, and if so, how. An example of this may be the effect of the type of settlement, where bivariate analyses indicated that the time use of those living in villages differed from those in other settlements in different ways depending on whether the poor or the non-poor group was studied.

The first feature that had different effects on the dependent variable when in interaction with poverty was the fact of living in villages, also corroborated by the multivariate analysis. Respondents who lived in a village and were not poor spent more time with relatives according to our estimations than the group designated as the reference category. However, those who were poor and lived in a village, spent significantly less time with their relatives.

Table 5

*Demographic and sociological variables determining time spent
in the company of relatives
(Linear regression analysis)*

Variables	<i>B</i> (minutes)	<i>p</i> -value
Constant	190.206	0.000
Poor	-2.864	0.122
Type of settlement		
County seat	-0.695	0.746
Town	4.454	0.024
Village	6.898	0.000
Sex		
Male	-12.316	0.000
Age group		
15-29 years	1.039	0.681
40-49 years	-20.105	0.000
50-59 years	-20.305	0.000
60-69 years	-31.875	0.000
70 + years	-46.550	0.000
Family status		
Unmarried	-70.141	0.000
Married but living separately from spouse	-50.943	0.000
Widow/widower	-80.278	0.000
Divorced	-58.340	0.000
Number of children in the family		
No children in the family	-28.962	0.000
1 child	-7.256	0.001
3 children	3.337	0.385
4 or more children	13.603	0.046
Economic activity		
On pension and employed	32.980	0.000
Pensioner	48.590	0.000
On disability assistance	45.003	0.000
On child care or maternity leave	165.044	0.000
Unemployed	44.278	0.000
Living on welfare benefits	48.456	0.000
Other dependent	10.746	0.000
Level of education		
Unfinished primary school	-14.998	0.000
Primary school	-17.274	0.000
Vocational school	-14.572	0.000
Secondary school	-12.293	0.000
<i>R</i> ²	<i>0.145</i>	

Note: Reference categories: non-poor, Budapest, female, 30-39 years, married, with 2 children, active and employed, graduate.

Another feature that had a significant effect in interaction with poverty was being married but living separately from the spouse. Without considering the effect of interaction, this feature effected a significant reduction in the value of the dependent variable. However, in conjunction with poverty, this reduction was substantially less in compari

son to the reference category. On the other hand, the divorced spent significantly less time with their relatives, and this difference was even more apparent among those who were divorced and poor as well.

The effect of the categories formed according to the number of children was also modified by the fact of belonging to the group of the poor. The value of the dependent variable was below that of the reference category if a family had no dependent children, or only one. According to our estimates, respondents from such families who are also poor spend even less time with their relatives. On the other hand, the effect of having a large family was significantly stronger when the effect of interaction was disregarded. Incorporation of the interaction effect allows the conclusion that people with large families, i.e. those with 3 or more dependent children, show opposite effects when they are poor, i.e. they spend less time with their relatives than the reference group.

The last category where poverty influenced the effect of the independent variable was that of people staying at home with a child on child care or maternity leave. Here, time spent with relatives was outstandingly high; however, it was decreased significantly by poverty.

Relationships with friends

With regard to relationships with friends, data other than those of time use were also analysed, as the questionnaire included questions about the number of friends, the frequency of meeting the most important friend, and the origin of this latter friendship.

Our data reveal that the number of people without friends is significantly higher among the poor. Here, 41 percent of respondents said they had no friends, while this figure was 26 percent among the non-poor (see Table 6.). Furthermore, within those who do have friends, the frequency of people who mention only one friendship is higher (32%) in the case of the poor than among the non-poor (26%). Also, the proportion of people reporting an extended network of friendships (5 or more friends) is lower among the poor. Here, 7 percent answered that they had at least 5 friends, while the same index was 12 percent among the non-poor. Thus, it can be stated that the relationships of the poor with friends are less extensive than those of the non-poor.

Poverty also entailed a significantly lower number of friends when the relation between these two variables was controlled using the effects of demographic and sociological characteristics.

Table 6

The person	Number of friends (percent)		Entire population
	Poor	Non-poor	
Has no friends	41.1	25.6	27.9
Has 1 friend	18.9	19.0	19.0
Has 2 friends	17.1	21.3	20.7
Has 3 to 5 friends	18.7	25.4	24.4
Has more than 5 friends	4.2	8.7	8.0
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

How are these data reflected in the time use of the poor? Do the poor spend less time nurturing these relationships? According to the figures of time use, the poor spend 37 minutes of an average day in the company of their friends, while the non-poor spend 42 minutes.

Table 7

Time use allotted to friends on an average day
(minutes)

Characteristics	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Type of settlement			
Budapest	43	43	43
County seat	42	45	45
Town	36	43	42
Village	34	38	37
Sex			
Male	54	53	53
Female	23	31	30
Age group			
15-29 years	72	82	80
30-39 years	30	32	32
40-49 years	40	26	28
50-59 years	28	26	26
60-69 years	26	21	22
70 + years	13	15	14
Family status			
Unmarried	72	86	84
Married	22	22	22
Married but living separately from spouse	35	45	40
Widow/widower	18	21	21
Divorced	40	33	35
Number of children in the family			
No children in the family	36	43	42
1 child	40	44	43
2 children	39	34	35
3 children	37	34	35
4 or more children	32	44	42
Economic activity			
Active and employed	34	38	38
On pension and employed	34	29	29
Pensioner	20	20	20
On disability assistance	27	32	31
On child care or maternity leave	9	15	13
Unemployed	74	70	71
Living on welfare benefits	72	42	56
Other dependent	78	90	88
Level of education			
Unfinished primary school	19	20	19
Primary school	42	44	43
Vocational school	45	43	44
Secondary school	36	46	45
College, university	37	35	35

There are no significant differences between types of settlements in the time spent with friends. However, in the case of the poor the dividing line is rather evident between major cities and smaller settlements (towns and villages), while the greatest step is between towns and villages in the case of the non-poor.

The amount of time spent with friends was influenced significantly by the age of the respondent. Higher ages entail less time allotted to friendly relationships. In most age groups, hardly any differences are evident between the poor and the non-poor. There are only two groups where major differences can be detected. One is the youngest age category, where the young spend less time with their friends, while the other is that of 40 to 49 years, where on the contrary, the poor allot more time to friends.

With regard to the other demographic characteristic, namely sex, two statements may be made. One is that in both sub-samples men spend significantly more time in the company of their friends. The other is that while in the case of men the value of the dependent variable is not influenced by the fact of poverty, poor women spend less time with their friends than non-poor women.

Family status is also a definite predictor of the figures of relationships with friends. People without a spouse spend most time on such relationships, with the only exception being widows and widowers. Significant differences between the poor and the non-poor are detectable in three groups. One is that of the unmarried, another is that of people living separately from their spouses, and the third is that of the divorced. In the first two cases, the poor spend less time with their friends; in the third one they spend more time with them than the non-poor.

With regard to economic activity, the most pregnant difference is found in those living on welfare benefits. Poor people living on allowance spend significantly more time on relationships with friends than the non-poor. On the other hand, estimated values are lower for the poor in the cases of those subsisting on child care or maternity leave and the dependent than for their non-poor counterparts.

Categories by educational level show that in the case of the non-poor, those with the lowest and highest levels of education spend the least time on relationships with friends. The only difference from this among the poor is that no difference is detectable among the values of the dependent variable in the groups of those with secondary school education and of college or university graduates (see Table 7).

After performing the bivariate analyses, we again examined whether poverty had an influence on the figures of time spent with friends after the effects of demographic and sociological characteristics have been removed. According to the estimates of the multivariate analysis, poverty has no independent effect on time spent in the company of friends. The differences found by the bivariate analyses were rather due to the structural differences existing between the poor and the non-poor (see Table 8).

Next, we determined the criteria whose effect on the dependent variable is modified by poverty. We found significant values in three of the categories whose interaction effects were included in the regression model. The first was the category of men. In comparison to the reference group, the fact of the respondent being a man significantly increased the amount of time spent with friends; and if poverty was also present, then the dependent variable had even higher estimated values.

Table 8

*Demographic and sociological characteristics determining
time spent with friends
(Linear regression analysis)*

Variables	<i>B</i> (minutes)	<i>p</i> -value
Constant	9.738	0.000
Poor	-2.289	0.131
Type of settlement		
County seat	2.403	0.175
Town	-0.175	0.914
Village	-3.834	0.017
Sex		
Male	20.202	0.000
Age group		
15-29 years	16.598	0.000
40-49 years	-5.696	0.002
50-59 years	-12.730	0.000
60-69 years	-21.549	0.000
70 + years	-30.268	0.000
Family status		
Unmarried	32.192	0.000
Married but living separately from spouse	16.098	0.000
Widow/widower	13.204	0.000
Divorced	13.744	0.000
Number of children in the family		
No children in the family	13.555	0.000
1 child	2.259	0.217
3 children	-1.614	0.611
4 or more children	-0.184	0.974
Economic activity		
On pension and employed	4.583	0.243
Pensioner	11.488	0.000
On disability assistance	6.148	0.009
On child care or maternity leave	-7.080	0.045
Unemployed	32.623	0.000
Living on welfare benefits	26.191	0.000
Other dependent	27.260	0.000
Level of education		
Unfinished primary school	-5.683	0.043
Primary school	-3.673	0.072
Vocational school	0.060	0.975
Secondary school	-0.552	0.768
<i>R</i> ²	<i>0.085</i>	

Note: Reference categories: non-poor, Budapest, female, 30-39 years, married, with 2 children, active and employed, graduate.

The second significant interaction could be detected in the category of the unmarried. Compared to the reference group, here the fact of poverty entailed a negative estimate, i.e. although the unmarried generally spend more time with friends than the categories based on other family statuses, these differences are decreased by poverty. Finally, dif

fering effects on the dependent variable were found in the group of those living on welfare benefits. The presence of both poverty and being on allowance increased time spent with friends significantly.

Relationships with neighbours

In this part of our study, we proceed to examine the significance of the relationships of the poor with neighbours. We attempt to confirm our hypothesis that such relationships have a greater significance in the lives of the poor than among the non-poor.

Time spent in the company of neighbours is higher among the poor than in the non-poor sample. While the poor spend 26 minutes with people living in their immediate vicinity on an average day, the non-poor spend 15 minutes. Poverty had a decisive effect on time spent with neighbours in each of the groups formed by individual demographic and sociological criteria. The pattern characteristic of the poor and the non-poor in the groups of various criteria, i.e. the relation of the individual groups to one another was also basically similar (see Table 9). Progression downward along the hierarchy of settlements entails an increase in the amount of time spent with neighbours. Inhabitants of villages spend the most time in the company of their neighbours among both the poor and the non-poor. With respect to the difference between the sexes, it can be stated that men spend more time with their neighbours than women do. With regard to age groups, the value of the dependent variable showed an increase corresponding to progression from the younger generations to the elderly. This trend only drops back in the oldest group, that of people over 70 years.

As far as family status is concerned, it is widows and widowers who spend the most time with people living in their immediate vicinity, among both the poor and the non-poor. In the case of the poor, similarly high values are apparent among the divorced, who spend nearly half an hour in the company of their neighbours on an average day. On the other hand this value is only half as much, i.e. one quarter of an hour among the non-poor. The greatest difference was detected in the group of the unmarried. Members of this group rely much more on such relationships among the poor than among the non-poor. The former spend 24 minutes with neighbours on an average day, while their non-poor counterparts spend only 11 minutes.

Grouping respondents by the number of dependent children living in their families yields the result that the highest values are found at the extremes. People who are not raising any children spend 28 minutes of a day in the case of the poor and 17 minutes in that of the non-poor with their neighbours. On the other hand, the corresponding figures for people with 4 or more children are 29 and 16 minutes, respectively. In the dimension of activity versus inactivity, 'hanging out' with neighbours is most prevalent among pensioners, the unemployed and those living on welfare benefits. As regards level of education, a decrease of time allotment corresponding to the rise in the hierarchy of schooling is evident among the non-poor. This trend, however, is not detectable among the poor. In the case of the poor, people with vocational or secondary school education are the ones who exhibit the lowest values (see Table 9).

Since higher use of time figures are found among the poor in almost every category, the multivariate analysis can be expected to indicate an independent effect of poverty on

the dependent variable. Our analysis supports this hypothesis, since our results indicate that poverty had a significant effect on, i.e. increased the value of the dependent variable (see Table 10).

Table 9

Time use allotted to neighbours on an average day
(minutes)

Characteristics	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Type of settlement			
Budapest	17	10	11
County seat	22	15	16
Town	24	15	16
Village	31	18	20
Sex			
Male	30	17	19
Female	22	13	15
Age group			
15-29 years	21	9	11
30-39 years	21	13	14
40-49 years	27	15	16
50-59 years	30	20	21
60-69 years	32	22	24
70 + years	27	22	23
Family status			
Unmarried	24	11	13
Married	24	15	16
Married but living separately from spouse	22	16	18
Widow/widower	33	26	27
Divorced	28	15	18
Number of children in the family			
No children in the family	28	17	19
1 child	17	12	12
2 children	25	11	13
3 children	23	12	15
4 or more children	29	16	21
Economic activity			
Active and employed	16	11	11
On pension and employed	27	11	13
Pensioner	30	23	24
On disability assistance	27	27	27
On child care or maternity leave	12	10	10
Unemployed	46	31	37
Living on welfare benefits	52	25	38
Other dependent	20	12	13
Level of education			
Unfinished primary school	30	27	28
Primary school	28	17	20
Vocational school	23	18	18
Secondary school	15	11	11
College, university	30	9	9

Table 10

*Demographic and sociological variables determining time spent
with neighbours*
(Linear regression analysis)

Variables	<i>B</i> (minutes)	<i>p</i> -value
Constant	-0.639	0.668
Poor	4.973	0.000
Type of settlement		
County seat	4.428	0.000
Town	4.081	0.000
Village	6.286	0.000
Sex		
Male	5.927	0.000
Age group		
15-29 years	-4.817	0.000
40-49 years	1.481	0.185
50-59 years	2.402	0.079
60-69 years	-1.294	0.515
70 + years	-5.511	0.012
Family status		
Unmarried	0.234	0.839
Married but living separately from spouse	1.002	0.705
Widow/widower	8.456	0.000
Divorced	1.741	0.159
Number of children in the family		
No children in the family	2.701	0.014
1 child	-0.107	0.922
3 children	0.059	0.975
4 or more children	4.724	0.161
Economic activity		
On pension and employed	0.825	0.726
Pensioner	9.970	0.000
On disability assistance	10.224	0.000
On child care or maternity leave	3.258	0.123
Unemployed	22.919	0.000
Living on welfare benefits	22.192	0.000
Other dependent	5.314	0.000
Level of education		
Unfinished primary school	7.578	0.000
Primary school	3.810	0.002
Vocational school	5.017	0.000
Secondary school	1.379	0.218
<i>R</i> ²	<i>0.023</i>	

Note: Reference categories: non-poor, Budapest, female, 30-39 years, married, with 2 children, active and employed, graduate.

Taking the effects of interaction into consideration, significant differences among the poor and the non-poor can be detected first of all in the case of men. Men spend more time with neighbours than the reference group, and this difference becomes sharper in the case of poor men.

Being poor also had a significant effect in the categories formed according to the number of children. People whose family included no children or had only one child spent significantly less time with their neighbours if they were poor. On the other hand, an analysis without considering interaction had showed a significantly higher value in the former category, that did not differ significantly from the reference category in the latter one.

Values were significantly higher in the groups of the unemployed and those living on welfare benefits, and this difference was increased by the fact of being poor.

Most categories of educational level also exhibited different effects in the poor and the non-poor groups. Compared to the reference category, estimates were lower for people with primary school education, and also significantly negative for people with a vocational or secondary-school education, when interaction with poverty was included in the analysis.

The intensity of relationships with neighbours is further supported by the fact that inquiry about the origin of one's most important friendship revealed that a higher proportion of the poor indicated neighbourhood as the origin of friendships than the non-poor. These relationships had been registered as friendships, even though many of these people are presumably still neighbours as well as friends (see Table 11).

Table 11

The origin of one's most important friendship
(percent)

Origin	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Childhood	24.1	24.2	24.2
School	14.8	25.3	24.0
Workplace	18.2	21.6	21.1
Kinship	11.6	5.9	6.7
Neighbourhood	21.5	11.8	13.0
Other	9.9	11.2	10.9
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>99.9</i>

THE ROLE OF WELFARE-PRODUCING ACTIVITY IN THE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS OF THE POOR

Apart from the intensity of the social relationships of the poor, we also examined the hypothesis that welfare-producing activities (namely work activity performed for their own households in the company of relatives, friends and neighbours, and for other households without taking payment) play a greater role in their network of personal relationships. To study this, we produced three variables. One of these expressed the proportion of time allotted to work within the time spent with relatives, another the same within time spent with friends, and the third the proportion of welfare-producing activities within the time spent with neighbours. All these indices could only be interpreted in cases where the respondent did allot some time to such activities on the day under review (see Table 12).

Table 12

*The proportion of those performing a specific activity on an average day
(percent)*

Time	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Time spent with relatives	78	83	82
Time spent with friends	19	22	22
Time spent with neighbours	21	13	14

The proportion of work within time spent with relatives was around 30 percent among both the poor and the non-poor. In the case of the poor, this value was 3 points higher. As regards time spent with friends, the poor allotted 37 percent of this time to work, and the non-poor 26 percent. However, within time spent with neighbours, it was the poor who allotted a smaller proportion to work activity (see Table 13).

Table 13

*The proportion of time allotted to a specific activity
(percent)*

Proportion of time	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Work within time spent with relatives	30	27	27
Work within time spent with friends	37	26	27
Work within time spent with neighbours	37	44	42

The structural differences between the poor and the non-poor obviously hide important differences in this case too. Therefore we performed a multivariate analysis to examine whether poverty still has a significant effect on the values of the dependent variable if this effect is controlled with other variables. Our results show that poverty had a significant effect on the figures of the proportion of work within time spent with relatives and friends; however, this effect did not prove to be significant in relationships with neighbours (see Table 14).

The influence of poverty on the effects of individual criteria was again analysed by using the incorporation of interaction components.

Most age groups had a significant influence on the proportion of work within time spent in the company of relatives. The older a respondent was, the smaller the value of this index became. However, poverty modified this effect substantially. When these categories were applied in our model in conjunction with poverty, then positive estimates resulted in the case of the age groups over 40, and increasingly older generations entailed increasingly higher coefficients. Poverty also reversed the effect of the criterion in the case of the unmarried. This group had yielded significantly lower values than the reference category, but examined with the incorporation of the effect of poverty, this coefficient assumed a positive value. Furthermore, negative estimates in comparison to the reference category were intensified by the presence of poverty in the cases of those without children, those with one child, and those of the lowest level of education.

Table 14

The proportion of work within time allotted to specific relationships
(Linear regression analysis)

Variables	Relatives		Friends		Neighbours	
	<i>B</i> (percent)	<i>p</i> -value	<i>B</i> (percent)	<i>p</i> -value	<i>B</i> (percent)	<i>p</i> -value
Constant	43.513	0.000	29.702	0.000	55.691	0.000
Poor	1.427	0.004	3.781	0.002	-2.047	0.172
Type of settlement						
County seat	3.656	0.000	7.893	0.000	12.331	0.000
Town	1.585	0.002	8.813	0.000	8.170	0.000
Village	4.640	0.000	13.645	0.000	7.198	0.000
Sex						
Male	-7.056	0.000	-5.116	0.000	3.494	0.009
Age group						
15-29 years	-1.684	0.010	-10.891	0.000	8.401	0.002
40-49 years	-8.127	0.000	2.387	0.155	-6.827	0.005
50-59 years	-7.726	0.000	4.517	0.026	-12.590	0.000
60-69 years	-9.188	0.000	-0.536	0.862	-25.029	0.000
70+ years	-13.007	0.000	-9.682	0.006	-35.278	0.000
Family status						
Unmarried	-11.415	0.000	-18.366	0.000	3.945	0.072
Married but living separately from spouse	-0.934	0.533	-19.555	0.000	-9.058	0.071
Widow/widower	-0.629	0.386	-4.236	0.037	-2.402	0.190
Divorced	-1.740	0.014	-15.093	0.000	0.601	0.792
Number of children in the family						
No children in the family	-12.783	0.000	-0.133	0.926	-1.636	0.497
1 child	-2.626	0.000	1.030	0.474	-1.745	0.494
3 children	1.035	0.273	7.849	0.004	2.252	0.583
4 or more children	3.207	0.056	2.677	0.555	1.557	0.809
Economic activity						
On pension and employed	6.515	0.000	3.741	0.275	1.580	0.478
Pensioner	5.863	0.000	10.724	0.000	3.351	0.569
On disability assistance	4.733	0.000	8.157	0.000	-9.570	0.000
On child care or maternity leave	25.476	0.000	4.889	0.217	-17.440	0.000
Unemployed	9.396	0.000	10.218	0.000	-0.238	0.933
Living on welfare benefits	8.551	0.000	14.962	0.000	-3.495	0.451
Other dependent	-3.172	0.000	-4.379	0.001	0.092	0.972
Level of education						
Unfinished primary school	-4.312	0.000	13.550	0.000	-12.033	0.000
Primary school	-3.631	0.000	6.971	0.000	-9.555	0.000
Vocational school	-1.053	0.088	8.733	0.000	-2.169	0.405
Secondary school	-1.865	0.002	6.014	0.000	-0.847	0.744
<i>R</i> ²	0.137		0.186		0.151	

Note: Reference categories: non-poor, Budapest, female, 30-39 years, married, with 2 children, active and employed, graduate.

As regards time spent with friends, people living in towns and in villages spent more time with work than the group assigned as the reference category. The fact of poverty intensified this effect. Differences between the sexes occurred with regard to time spent with friends, where men spent a smaller proportion of this time doing work. The influ

ence of poverty on this phenomenon was that it produced even lower indices for men. Apart from the previous, three more demographic categories showed impacts that were altered significantly when in interaction with poverty. One was the age group of 15 to 29 years, where the negative estimate was further aggravated by the presence of poverty. The other two effects were found in families that had no dependent children or had one child. Both of these cases had a negative influence on the dependent variable when poverty was also present.

With respect to relationships with neighbours, the effect of only one category was altered when analysed in conjunction with poverty. This was the age group of 15 to 29 years, where the interaction component had a negative impact on the dependent variable.

POVERTY AND THE PERCEPTION OF SOCIAL INTEGRATION

So far, our study has been concerned with the manner that poverty influences the patterns of the network of personal relationships. We principally focused on illuminating relationship ties that appear in time use. However, the existence of a personal relationship network can be measured not only by objective, but by subjective factors as well. The latter indicate the way respondents experience the presence of these ties. In the subsequent section we will elaborate the connection of a few such indicators with poverty.

A characteristic feature of subjective indicators is that they integrate numerous factors in a unique way, and it is thus very hard to equate them with objective figures. The first indicator whose connection with poverty we studied was the feeling of loneliness. It is quite obvious that this indicator is also an integration of many various feelings, probably also including satisfaction with one's family, friends, neighbours and relationships at work. The weight of such individual factors in the indicator is probably dependent on individual life stages as much as on traits of personality.

Among our subjects, nearly 20 percent of the poor, but merely 10 percent of the non-poor often feel lonely. The proportion of those who sometimes, but not often, feel lonely is similarly higher among the poor (see Table 15).

Table 15

<i>Feeling lonely</i> (percent)			
The person	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Often feels lonely	19.7	9.2	10.9
Sometimes feels lonely	24.1	19.1	19.8
Does not really feel lonely	24.0	27.2	26.6
Does not feel lonely	30.2	43.6	41.7
Does not know	1.9	0.9	1.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>99.9</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.1</i>

Another indicator of the perception of social integration is even more extensive than the indicator of loneliness. This is the extent to which subjects feel that they hold their fate in their own hands, that they are able to control the paths of their lives, that they are

not drifting along with the events of their lives. The values of this indicator reveal that the proportion of those who feel they are not in control of their lives is much higher among the poor than among the non-poor (see Table 16).

Table 16

Faith in the ability to influence individual existence
(percent)

The person	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Feels unable to influence his/her fate	25.9	14.7	16.4
Sometimes feels unable to influence his/her fate	47.4	44.9	45.2
Does not feel unable to influence his/her fate	15.1	22.8	21.8
Feels able to influence his/her fate	8.2	16.4	15.0
Does not know	3.5	1.2	1.7
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.1</i>

Another issue directly related to the issue of the network of personal relationships is the extent to which subjects generally trust people. This has an obvious bearing on the formation of their relationships with friends, neighbours and colleagues.

Beyond the fact that mistrust of others has a strong presence in society at large, this feeling is even more intense among the poor. A mere 17 percent of the poor feel that most people can be trusted (see Table 17).

Table 17

Faith in people
(percent)

Denomination	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Most people can be trusted	16.7	24.4	23.3
It is better to be careful and not to trust people	76.2	71.5	72.1
Does not know	7.2	4.1	4.6
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.1</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Table 18

Perception of solidarity in society
(percent)

The person	Poor	Non-poor	Entire population
Feels that no one cares about what is happening to others	32.0	19.8	21.6
Feels that people frequently do not care about what is happening to others	42.6	45.3	44.8
Feels that people care about others rather than not	15.6	23.6	22.5
Feels that people do care about what is happening to others	4.6	8.8	8.0
Does not know	5.2	2.5	3.1
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

While the indicators studied so far were expressions of individual feelings with regard to one's social relationships and the faith in one's social environment, the indicator in

Table 18 is one that reflects the subject's perception of the openness of his or her environment to human relationships, i.e. his or her experience of social solidarity. This indicator shows highly significant differences among the poor and the non-poor too. Nearly a third of the poor but only one quarter of the non-poor feel that people do not care at all about what is happening to others.

*

Our study analysed the patterns of the personal relationship networks of the poor. On the basis of the theory of social exclusion we first examined whether the social relationships of the poor are indeed more limited than those of others. We attempted to prove our initial hypotheses with the aid of data of the use of time of the subjects. The same data were used in the examination of another phenomenon, one that has already been partially explored by network research and sociographical literature on poverty, namely the role of neighbours in the life of the poor. Subsequently, we attempted to determine the role played in the social relationships of the poor by so-called welfare producing activities, e.g. work that the poor perform for themselves in company, or that they perform for others without taking payment. Finally, we collected a few subjective indicators that reflect the perception of social relationships and the possibility of integration.

Our results show that with respect to the objects of social relationships, poverty had a significant influence only on one type of relationship, namely that with neighbours. Regardless of various demographic and sociological criteria, the poor spend more time in the company of their neighbours than the non-poor. However, this does not imply that the co-existence of poverty with certain criteria does not have an effect on the relationships studied. For example, it is the youngest age group who spend most time with friends, when the factor of age is examined on its own, i.e. after removing the effects of other variables. Yet poverty significantly modifies this, as respondents in the age group of 15 to 29 years spend significantly less time with their friends if they are poor than if they belong to the reference category. Thus, poverty can have both global effects and localised ones acting through specific criteria. Our attempt in this study has been to reveal both types of effects.

With regard to time use in the network of social relationships, the proportion of work within the time spent with relatives and friends was significantly higher among the poor. This could not be proven for relationships with neighbours.

Scrutiny of social integration, of the perception of social relationships, i.e. of the subjective experience of the network of social relationships indicates that among the poor there is a higher proportion of people who feel lonely, who do not trust their environment, and who also experience mistrust on the part of others surrounding them. Further inquiry is necessary about the causes of this. One reason might be that objective and subjective loneliness do not reflect the same phenomenon. Possibly, subjective feelings integrate a greater number of factors, perhaps not only a closer personal relationship network, but also connection, or lack thereof, to other institutions of society (e.g. civil organisations). And it is also possible that other methods of studying networks of relationships – which have been referred to at the beginning of this study – might indicate a closer correlation with the subjective indicators.

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